

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 VO-03 SCA-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SS-15 L-03 NSC-05 SY-05 H-02

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P R 030745Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4461

INFO AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 5916

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF ICEN (VULKOV, ROSEN NIKOLOV), TU BU

SUBJ: FORCIBLE RETURN OF VULKOV

REF: ISTANBUL 2935

1. UPON RECEIPT REFTEL, I TELEPHONED CONGEN TO ASK THAT EFFORT BE MADE TO VERIFY AT HIGHER LEVEL GOT INTENTIONS TO FORCIBLY RETURN VULKOV. ON ASSUMPTION THAT REFTEL'S INFO CORRECT, HOWEVER, AND ON FURTHER ASSUMPTION THAT GOT LIKELY TO BE MOVING QUICKLY TO EFFECT FORCIBLE REPATRIATION,

I ASKED DCM BERGUS TO TELEPHONE MFA DIRECTOR EASTERN DEPT ASENA. (LATTER WAS OUR WORKING LEVEL CONTACT DURING BRAZINSKAS EPISODE.)

2. BERGUE GOT THROUGH TO ASENA APPROXIMATELY 8:00 P.M. ASENA FIRST OF ALL PROFESSED TO HAVE LITTLE OR NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE CASE. HE THEN, HOWEVER, WENT ON TO ASSURE DCM THAT GOT DECISION, WHATEVER IT MIGHT BE, WOULD NOT BE TAKEN ON ANY KIND OF " POLITICAL GROUNDS". AFTER A LITTLE PAUSE, HE SAID HE THOUGHT HE "HAD THE CASE IN HIS MEMORY." HE THOUGHT IT INVOLVED A BULGARIAN " WHO WANTED TO BE A
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REFUGEE FOR INSUFFICIENT REASONS", AND HIS DEMAND HAD

BEEN REFUSED BY THE GOT. BERGUS SAID HE WAS NOT AT THIS POINT QUESTIONING THE SUBSTANTIVE PROS AND CONS OF THE DECISION. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT VULKOV HAD TURNED HIMSELF OVER TO TURK AUTHORITIES ON ADVICE OF US CONSULATE GENERAL IN ISTANBUL, AND HE SUGGESTED THAT HIS BEING THEN RETURNED TO THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN BULGARIA COULD HAVE AN EFFECT ON US PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION AT AN IMPORTANT JUNCTURE IN OUR RELATIONS. ASENA BRIDLED AT THIS, BUT SEEMED TO BE MOLLIFIED WHEN BERGUS SAID THAT ALL THAT HE WAS ASKING WAS THE GOT AVOID HASTY ACTION IN THIS MATTER AND LEAVE THINGS AS THEY WERE UNTIL WE BOTH COULD DISCUSS THEM UNDER LESS TIME PRESSURE ON FOLLOWING MORNING. ASENA SAID HE WOULD SEE WHAT HE COULD DO.

3, SOMETIME AFTER 9:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, I WAS AGAIN IN TOUCH WITH CONGEN WHO ADVISED ME THAT DEPUTY PRINCIPAL OFFICER OGDEN HAD JUST ASCERTAINED FROM CHIEF OF ISTANBUL POLICE THAT INFO RE FORCED REPATRIATION WAS ACCURATE AND THAT VULKOV AND GUARDS HAD LEFT ISTANBUL FOR EDIRNE (THE BORDER CROSSING POINT BETWEEN TURKEY AND BULGARIA) AT 6:00 P.M. THAT EVENING. ON THE STRENGTH OF THIS DEVELOPMENT, I ASKED BERGUS TO CALL BACK ASENA.

4. THE SECOND CALL TO ASENA TOOK PLACE SHORTLY AFTER 9:30 P.M. LOCAL TIME. BERGUS REPORTED THAT WE HAD NOW LEARNED FROM A RESPONSIBLE GOT SOURCE THAT VULKOV HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM ISTANBUL TO EDIRNE SEVERAL HOURS PREVIOUSLY. ASENA INDICATED THAT HE HAD HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO "REFRESH HIS MEMORY" ABOUT THE CASE. HE THEN SAID GOT HAD DETERMINED THAT IT WAS NOT A CASE OF BONA FIDE REFUGEE FROM BULGARIA BUT " A SIMPLE CRIMINAL CASE." HE SAID THAT HE WOULD IN THE NEXT DAY OR SO BE IN A POSITION TO INFORM BERGUS AS TO THE BACKGROUND OF THE CASE. BERGUS AGAIN URGED THAT GOT TAKE NO IRREVOCABLE STEPS IN THIS MATTER AND LEAVE ITS OPTIONS OPEN UNTIL THERE WAS OPPORTUNITY FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION BETWEEN EMBASSY AND GOT. ASENA AGAIN QUESTIONED BASIS FOR USG INVOLVEMENT IN WHAT WAS ESSENTIALLY AND PROPERLY A GOT DECISION.

5. EARLIER IN THE EVENING, I HAD CONTACTED NESSIM SHALLON,
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SENIOR UN REP IN ANKARA, TO APPRISE HIM OF SITUATION AND SUGGEST THAT HE EXPRESS HIS CONCERN TO APPROPRIATE GOT AUTHORITIES. UPON LEARNING THAT VULKOV WAS NOW ON HIS WAY TO EDIRNE, I CALLED BACK SHALLON TO GIVE HIM THIS INFO. SHALLON ADVISED THAT HE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO REACH ANY OF HIS NORMAL FONOFF CONTACTS. I REPORTED THAT EMBASSY HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH ASENA AND SUGGESTED IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR SHALLON TO DO THE SAME. SOMEWHAT LATER,

SHALLON CALLED BACK TO SAY THAT HE HAD REACHED ASENA AND THAT LATTER HAD PROFESSED LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON. HE HAD LEFT SHALLON WITH IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS TAKING NO ACTION TO HEAD OFF FORCED REPATRIATION AT EDIRNE.

6. QUESTION THEN AROSE AS TO WHETHER FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS, AT HIGHER LEVEL, TO GOT WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE IN THE LIGHT OF ASENA'S CATEGORIC STATEMENT THAT GOT REGARDED THIS AS A CRIMINAL AND NOT A POLITICAL MATTER, AND A DECISION CLEARLY FALLING WITHIN ITS OWN SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY AND ITS OWN INTERPRETATION OF GOT OBLIGATIONS UNDER RELEVANT REFUGEE AGREEMENTS. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT, IT WAS DECIDED THAT FURTHER EMBASSY DEMARCHES WOULD BE POINTLESS.
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